

THE
COMMEMORATION

8

OF
NATIONAL DELIVERANCES,

AND THE

DAWNING DAY:

TWO SERMONS,

PREACHED NOVEMBER 5th AND 18th, 1793,

AT HOW'S-LANE CHAPEL, PLYMOUTH,

By W. WINTERBOTHAM.

'T WAS IN THE CAUSE OF BRITAIN'S RIGHT,
THAT PATRIOT HAMPDEN FELL IN FIGHT,
AND SYDNEY ON A SCAFFOLD DIED;
ILLUSTRIOUS PAIR, YOUR COUNTRY'S PRIDE!
TO AVENGE YOUR DEATHS ONE MONARCH BLEED,
HURL'D FROM HIS THRONE ANOTHER FLED:
EVENTFUL DEEDS, FROM WHICH THIS LESSON SPRINGS,
THE PEOPLE MAKE THE LAWS AND LAWS WERE MADE FOR KINGS.

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M,DCC,XC,IV,





THE Author hopes his Situation will plead an Excuse for the following Errors of the Press, and some others of less Importance.

Page	Line
3,	6, for <i>theron</i> , read <i>thereon</i>
13,	2, for <i>confiderations</i> , read <i>consideration</i>
14,	8, after <i>determined</i> , add <i>on</i>
—	16, for <i>oppose</i> , read <i>opposed</i>
15,	8, for <i>op-pressive</i> , read <i>oppressed</i>
32,	19, for <i>condemn</i> , read <i>contemn</i>
41,	15, for <i>de</i> , read <i>be</i>
—	16, for <i>Apsstles</i> , read <i>Apostle's</i>
47,	7, for <i>corruption</i> , read <i>corruptions</i>
—	22, for <i>ages</i> , read <i>age</i>
52,	14, for <i>Apostles</i> , read <i>Apostle</i>
53,	15, for <i>wantonefs</i> , read <i>wantonness</i>
—	24, for <i>minds</i> , read <i>mind</i>
57,	5, after <i>unto</i> , add <i>you</i>
59,	5, after <i>light</i> , add <i>and</i>

In the Advertisement of the Address, for *this day* is published, read in the Press, and *speedily will be published*.

P R E F A C E.

IN laying the following discourses before the Public, the Author neither expects to gain popularity nor credit; on the contrary he is inclined to believe that he shall incur much odium and censure, and perhaps a great share of the latter from men whose private virtues he admires, and whose religious sentiments in the general he approves. The Author is aware that the subjects of these Sermons, particularly of the first, are gradually growing unpopular in this country; and the stile in which they are written and the manner in which they are treated, he is fully persuaded will lay him open to a Critic's attack—This however gives him but little concern, the popularity or unpopularity of a subject has never influenced his mind in the pursuit after Truth, and he trusts never will.—In his pursuits in life he hopes the same sentiment will be reduced to practice,

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and ever influence his conduct.—The question he would always wish to ask himself is, WHAT IS HIS DUTY? and not, what may be for his interest? (if it is possible to put a man's duty and his real interest at variance) on this great principle he has acted in the present instance, and conscious of having done what was his duty as a man and a Briton, the difficulties and trials of his present unmeritted situation afford him more pleasure than pain, and of consequence leave him nothing to regret on account of having embraced a cause which corruption, bigotry, and fear, have rendered unpopular.—As an excuse for the stile in which these discourses are written, the Author wishes the reader to consider that they never were intended for public inspection; that they were hasty compositions, wherein a connection of ideas was more attended to than the mode of expression; that an obligation to print the very expressions used in the delivery prevents any correction, and that choice has not led him in this instance to commence Author: this being the case he feels a persuasion that wherever ability and liberality are united he

shall meet with the utmost indulgence, and where these are wanting, praise or censure will produce neither pleasure nor pain—the object of publishing them, was, in the first instance, to bring the whole of a Case before the Public, which has been industriously misrepresented—A case where *malice*, *perjury*, *ignorance*, and *prejudice*, have combined to hurl destruction on an individual—A case in which tho' an individual is apparently the principal sufferer, the whole community is interested.

Another object was the gratification of a numerous circle of friends, to whose liberality the Author is indebted for every temporal enjoyment he experiences in his present situation, and to whose earnest solicitation he felt himself bound to accede.

On the Sermons themselves he has but few observations to make, some however are necessary. The first, and that the most material, is the authenticity of them—he has no doubt but his enemies will do by them as they have done by the report of the Trials, attempt to impeach their veracity—they will assert that they are mutilated; and where

barefaced assertion will not do, insinuation will be tried—it will be said the Sermons were delivered extempore and that it was impossible to give literal and correct copies of them—both these methods have been resorted to, from the moment the intention of publishing them was announced—it is indeed the only method which can be pursued by those concerned in the prosecution to avoid the indignation of every honest member of society—the dupes of this conduct will however be few, except amongst those whose bigotry and ignorance would lead them to pursue the same measures, against any other individual, in like circumstances. The first Sermon was written at length prior to its delivery, and that part of the second which has any respect to magistracy was not only written, but read from the pulpit. But if these precautions are not deemed sufficient to remove all doubts on the subject, the numbers, respectability, and abilities of the evidences adduced on his part on the trial, is a sufficient shield to the Author from these accusations and insinuations, and it is this consideration which has induced him to decline the offer

PREFACE.

of others to attest the Sermons on oath—he therefore contents himself in declaring that he has been scrupulously exact in laying them before the public as they were delivered, and he feels no difficulty in appealing to every individual who heard them (the witnesses for the crown excepted) for the truth of this assertion.—He has neither altered nor mutilated any sentence or expression in them—On the contrary he has in many instances sacrificed propriety of expression to a resolution often avowed to his friends, to present them literally to the public.—It therefore now only remains for him to answer a question that the Author and his friends have frequently had put to them—Why introduce politics into the pulpit?—In his notes on the trial he has endeavoured to vindicate this conduct, and to that vindication he adds his sincere wishes that the pulpit may never be prostituted to worse purposes than the inculcation of principles of civil and religious liberty. But those who have put this question may think themselves entitled to a more explicit answer; to these the Author replies, that it has ever been his constant aim TO ADAPT

HIS DISCOURSES TO THE OCCASION OF THEIR DELIVERY, if therefore he erred in introducing politics into the pulpit, or if it was a crime for which he is justly punished, then he has to complain of the Legislature of the country which enjoined the commemoration of those events which render the introduction of politics necessary.—But it has been asked, why do it at a time when the appearance of discontent in the country was so manifest as to call forth a royal proclamation &c.?—To this the Author replies, that if that proclamation had any meaning, it was certainly levelled at a work intended to display the superiority of a republican form of government over every other.—That the author's arguments had made a deep impression on the public mind needs no other proof than the proclamation itself—the government evidently felt that the affections of the country were alienated in a great degree, and in order to stop the further progress of disaffection it thought it necessary to prevent as far as possible the future sale of a work conceived to be pregnant with mischief.—If these were the views of the government, and all their transactions since

proves that they were, the author would ask what step, in the narrow sphere in which he acted, could he have taken more decidedly to second their efforts than by attempting to convince those who were dissatisfied, if such there were, that our own government as by law established, was founded on the very principles of freedom which the friends of a republican government contended for.

In adopting this line of conduct the Author confesses he rather expected the approbation than the vengeance of those who guide the helm of affairs in this country—attached to the names of PITT and RICHMOND, from whom he received his political creed, and by whom he was first led to contemplate the WRETCHED STATE of our representation, he little thought that while they occupied their present exalted stations he should have been involved in a legal contest, the attendant expences of which have been THREE HUNDRED AND THIRTY SEVEN POUNDS and upwards, and the eventful issue *four years imprisonment, TWO HUNDRED POUNDS FINE, and nine hundred pounds security for five years*, for asserting in more temperate language than themselves the abso-

lute necessity of a Parliamentary reform, or rather for contending for what they had convinced him, and every man possessed of common sense, was necessary for the preservation of our individual and national prosperity—such however is the case and such the author's situation, in the midst of which he enjoys the pleasing reflection of having acted agreeable to the dictates of his conscience, and consistent with his character as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus.

*State Side of Newgate, June 28, 1794. }
being the 1st. year of Imprisonment. }*

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED NOVEMBER 5TH, 1792.

EXODUS, 13, 8.

*"Thou shalt shew thy Son in that day, saying
this is done because of that which the Lord
did unto me."*

THOSE who are acquainted with the historical part of the OLD TESTAMENT, will not need information from me respecting the circumstances to which these words refer:—such will remember they are connected with the narrative of a particular deliverance, which God wrought out for his ancient people the Jews:—A deliverance, which rescued them from CIVIL and ECCLESIASTICAL OPPRESSION, bringing them forth from the hands of him who held their

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persons in bondage, and refused them the liberty of going into the wilderness, to worship God, agreeable with his injunctions, and the dictates of their own consciences.

Before the final accomplishment of this deliverance, the LORD, by the lips of his servant Moses, enjoined two duties on this people, to be attended to during the continuance of that dispensation on which they were about to enter: viz. 1. To commemorate annually their deliverance, by the celebration of a religious Festival, the particulars of which he instructed them in: * 2. At this Festival, to impress on the minds of the rising generation, the great ends and purposes of its institution: as expressed in the words of our text: "Thou shalt shew thy son in that day, &c."

An example, thus set at the express command of God himself, of commemorating national deliverances and blessings, has, in a greater or lesser degree, been followed by every nation of whom we have any knowledge, particularly by those who profess christianity: and amongst the latter by none more than our own country, which has not

* EXODUS, Chap. xii. &c.

been sparing in setting apart days for the commemoration of Events, WHICH A WISE MAN WOULD HESITATE TO PRONOUNCE BLESSINGS.—The separation of this day, and the Events we are called to commemorate thereon, are however honourable exceptions; and are at once monuments of NATIONAL LIBERTY, and LEGISLATIVE WISDOM.

But the GREAT ENDS proposed by our ancestors in this annual commemoration must be frustrated, and ourselves injured in the stead of being benefited thereby, if we are not properly instructed into the NATURE and PRINCIPLES of the events we commemorate; and the disposition and motives with which they ought to be commemorated. That this may not be the case, I will attempt to preserve the intention of the legislature, and the spirit of my text, by offering a few remarks on

The disposition and motives essential to a proper commemoration of national deliverances and blessings.

The Events designed to be commemorated on this day.

The present appearance of affairs in our own and neighboring nations, with refer-

ence to those events.

And on what ought to be our duty as BRITONS and CHRISTIANS under these circumstances.

On the first of these we observe that as GOD is the author, appointer, and over-ruler of all Events, a primary motive ought to be the acknowledgement of his sovereignty:—In the present instance this ought particularly to be the case, as the Events we commemorate carry with them a visible display of the interposition of Divine Providence on our behalf.

AGAIN—As GOD is the grand Author of every blessing, a farther motive should be the rendering to him that tribute of Praise which is his just due:—hence we should endeavour to attain to a proper knowledge, and a due sense of the importance of the events we commemorate, that we may not be strangers to that gratitude of heart which is essential to true praise.

BUT—As in general national Deliverances are accomplished, and national blessings secured thro' the medium of second causes and instruments;—in the commemoration of them a degree of veneration is due to those

instruments,—THEIR VIRTUE, COURAGE, and PATRIOTISM, ought to be kept in view as EXAMPLES, which under like circumstances ought to be imitated :* for in vain do we commemorate national deliverances and privileges while we remain destitute of those qualifications by which our ancestors secured those blessings for us.

AGAIN—In the commemoration of nati-

* In the cross examination of one of my witnesses Mr. Sergeant Rocke, who has since been exalted to the Bench, seemed quite shocked at this very seditious expression, and apparently under the influence of horror and amazement that a character could be found capable of uttering it, exclaimed, WHAT! DID HE SAY WE OUGHT TO IMITATE THEIR CONDUCT? The answer was repeated—YES IN LIKE CIRCUMSTANCES.—This doctrine I still maintain, and amidst the gloom of a dungeon will assert, that the moment a Monarch of this realm dares to imitate the conduct of James, and attempt the subversion of the Constitution of this Country, “by violating its fundamental laws,” that under such circumstances the people have a right to follow the example of their forefathers and hurl the despot from the throne; and I most sincerely hope they will possess sufficient Virtue to accomplish it.—At the same time I as sincerely pray, that a virtuous moderation in the Governors and Governed may prevent a struggle from taking place, which if viewed in the most favourable light, must be attended with calamities of the most awful kind to both parties.

onal deliverances and blessings all PARTY SPIRIT ought to be abolished, for to celebrate these with the narrow spirit of a Secretary is despicable in the extreme ; it stains the national character of a noble and free people, and engenders strife and misery instead of happiness—Of this the commemoration of the 30th of January is a sufficient proof ; the only benefit accruing from which, is one part of the nation railing at and abusing the other, whereby party animosity is increased and cherished, the effects of which we have seen in the late awful riots at Birmingham, where a few FRIENDS OF FREEDOM, whom posterity will enrol with the Saviours of their Country, feeling their hearts expand at the tidings which had reached their ears, and desirous of celebrating the dawn of Liberty amongst twenty five millions of their fellow men, were set upon by a Banditti, artfully wrought up to enthusiasm by the cry of *Church and King* ; THEIR LIVES ENDANGERED, THEIR PROPERTY PLUNDERED, AND THEIR HABITATIONS DESTROYED—" Oh my soul come not thou into their secret, nor mine honour be not thou allied with them ; cursed be

their anger for it was fierce and their wrath for it was cruel."—The events we this day commemorate need none of this assistance, they are not the *triumphs of a party* but of a nation in which every individual, whether churchman or dissenter, ought to take his share and no distinguishing names be known but those of a Briton and a Christian—standing I trust in each of these characters, I will attempt

Secondly—To point out what those events are which we are this day called to commemorate.

The first is our deliverance from the yoke of Papal Tyranny and oppression; a yoke in every view hateful, but made more particularly so, by the means used, again to subjugate us to it, after our deliverance from it.

Were I to attempt to set before you the nature of this yoke, or to portray the persecuting spirit of the Church of Rome in its proper colours, I must point you to its bloody transactions in Italy, Germany, Spain, France, Ireland and Britain, in doing which I should call upon you to contemplate the fertile Vallies of Piedmont; Vallies fertilized

with the blood of the lowly followers of Jesus Christ—From thence I should lead you to trace the monuments of bigotry and superstition, as well as those of persecution, thro' the various parts of the German Empire; monuments of eternal disgrace to a Church, professing itself to be the Church of the meek and lowly Jesus—From Germany, I should guide your reflections to those horrid scenes exhibited in Spain, fruits of the Inquisition, an institution revived with all its hellish powers no farther back than 1776. I should lead you to Paris, and bid you reflect on the many thousands there massacred in cold blood, and then bid you ask, what were the crimes of which they were guilty, or for which they were so inhumanly butchered; had they disturbed the peace of their country? were they the enemies of mankind? Alas! no such accusations could be brought against them; nothing of this kind can be charged to their account, to palliate the cruelties of their Persecutors—No; they were persons whose obedience was secured by the strongest of ties, the binding force of conscience; but who, while they bowed to civil jurisdiction, dared with respect to the

salvation of their souls, and their spiritual concerns, to call no man master on Earth, because God had expressly forbidden them so to do,

The massacre of nearly thirty thousand of these persons awakened no remorse in the breasts of the holy Pontiff or Conclave at Rome, but on the contrary the most lively emanations of joy—A solemn procession took place on the occasion—The holy Father returned public and solemn thanks to the merciful redeemer for the bloody transaction, while others celebrated it in odes, published to the world apologies for it, and finally represented it as the triumph of the church.*

If from this scene I engage you to turn

* If those persons whose tender minds are harrassed with ideas of republican ferocity were to meditate a little on this far from heightened description of one among many of the *recorded blessings* of the old French monarchical government, it would certainly have a tendency to shorten the days of their mourning on its account. I would wish the friends of that departed system of despotism, to compare the most awful scenes of the revolution with that we have now noticed, which is far from a solitary instance of cruelty in the history of the French Monarchy; and I would ask them even with the history of the 10th of Au-

your attention to our own realms, the same awful picture presents itself to our view. Ireland has witnessed the destruction of one hundred and fifty thousand of her protestant children, in the space of two months under the government of a king, whom a papistical court afterwards canonized as a Saint and martyr, and instituted an annual humiliation for his death, which to the indelible disgrace of the nation is still attended to.—Scotland has also felt the iron hand of papal

gust and the 2d of September before their eyes, if they can seriously lament the destruction of a government which sanctioned the perpetration of such barbarity; or the downfall of that religion whose ministers were capable of returning God thanks for it.—For my own part, while I lament the scenes which I conceive have tarnished the French Revolution—while I will not yield in sympathy and regret for the unfortunate victims that have fallen in the contest, to any individual whoever he may be;—Yet I cannot bring myself to be the enemy of what I consider as the praise worthy attempt of a great nation, to recover that Liberty which is their *inherent* right, and which despotism had deprived them of—and truly sorry indeed shall I be if any enemies, from within or without, should ever succeed in again bringing under the shackles of despotism, whatever name or form it may assume, a people who whatever may have been the crimes of a few individuals, have proved themselves worthy of the most exalted freedom.

power, and England has severely smarted beneath the yoke—Oh, could Smithfield, Oxford, and Gloucester, with the various towns and cities in this kingdom, speak of the horrid spectacles exhibited in them while subjected to the Papal See; what awful scenes would they disclose—let us call to our recollection the events of that short period from 1553 to 1558—Friends of LIBERTY and RELIGION, view the venerable Prelate, fastened to the stake, yielding up his spirit 'midst devouring flames—You that feel or sustain the tender ties of nature, contemplate the Husband torn from the arms of a beloved Partner and tender offspring, dragged to the dreary dungeon, racked with excruciating torments, and consigned to death—The tender MOTHER, stripped of HUSBAND and CHILD, without an earthly comforter, left alone to bewail her widowed state, while the BROTHER and FRIEND, stripped of all their earthly joys, mingle groans with groans;—reflect on these scenes, and while reflecting, may you feel gratitude taking possession of your hearts for deliverance from them.

We might pursue the horrid track of Popish bigotry, cruelty and superstition, thro' every country in Europe; we might follow its bloody footsteps into America, and every other part of the world where it has reared its hellish banner, and portray scenes, at the bare recital of which, human nature must shudder; but methinks you say drop the curtain, hide the bloody system from our view—I obey—only further noticing an attempt or two which have been made to subject us again to the yoke.

The first of these was the attempt of Spain with what was termed the invincible Armada, in 1588.

The second that which we more particularly commemorate on this day, when the attempt was made to deprive us of a government at a blow, by consigning KING, LORDS AND COMMONS into one general abyss of ruin.

The means taken to effect this horrid design you know, and the manner in which God appeared, brought their counsel to nought, and made their devices of no effect. Oh! let me impress on your minds the important thought, that a life of gratitude is

too little for a deliverance so great.*

We now pass to the considerations of another event which we are this day called to commemorate. This is the glorious REVOLUTION, of 1688—do not startle at the word, for it was known in England long before France had the least conception of or acquaintance with the blessings couch'd under it. That we may have proper Ideas of this event we will,

1. Enter into a brief Narrative of the facts;
2. Deduce from those facts the principles contain'd in, and established by them.

The facts are plain, Charles the II. and

* What I have said in the preceding pages respecting popery, or what is termed the Roman Catholic Persuasion, will not, I hope, be attributed to personality or a sectarian spirit; far be it from me to heighten the animosities between the Catholic and Protestant—determined to enjoy liberty of conscience myself, I shall ever be the advocate for extending it to others—wishing to be found in the exercise of every Christian Virtue—my affection is extended to every one found with a like desire.—The conduct, and not the Creed, will to me ever be the criterion of Christianity—as a dissenter suffering under, but struggling for, the abolition of the remains of feudal Oppression, I am free to say, I shall ever deem that Government tyrannic that does not afford equal advantages to the Catholic and Protestant—the Churchman and Dissenter, the professor of Judaism and the follower of Mahomet.

the **DESPOT** who succeeded him, had both professed themselves Papists.—The former however had never a convenient opportunity publicly to avow it, tho' he reckoned his final happiness to depend upon it.*

His Successor, however, not quite so delicate, was no sooner seated on the throne than he determined the extirpation of the **FEW SPARKS OF LIBERTY**, which for want of power his licentious brother had left, and resolved, at all events, to exercise absolute authority over church and state.

In these circumstances, *seven* venerable Bishops stepped forward in behalf of injured freedom, and not only remonstrated with, but boldly oppose the **HAUGHTY TYRANT**;

* In order to pave the way for his own open profession, and the re-establishment of the Romish religion in his dominions, Charles, in 1669, entered into a secret treaty with the Court of France; the principal articles of which were the extirpation of the Dutch, or at least the total annihilation of their government—and the assistance of France against his own subjects, if any of them should be found to oppose his *pious* wishes: the whole of this infamous treaty may be found in a work, entitled a *Secret History of the Court and Reign of Charles the II.* a work worthy of the attention of every man, who wishes for Information on the causes which led to the revolution, of which we are treating.

for which they were committed close Prisoners to the Tower.* Torn from their families, and pastoral functions, the nation, at least the Protestant part of it, manifested its concern by sighs and groans, while the genius of popery reared its ghastly head and grinn'd a smile: But here the Lord appeared again in behalf of this oppressive land, and inspired William to avenge England's wrongs.

The Trumpets sound the Cannons roar,
The Hero gains the happy Shore.

Hailed as Britannia's saviour, her sons
flocked to his standard while the HAUGHTY
TYRANT TO ESCAPE HIS FATHER'S FATE,
with a guilty conscience, fled from the
country he had attempted to enslave.

Thus circumstanced, the voice of the nation,
thro' its representatives, declared the

* In the delivery of this Sermon, after the word circumstances, the following sentence was introduced "what, might justly be stiled a miracle, the like having never before or since appeared in this country," seven venerable bishops, &c. In order to avoid a long parenthesis of little consequence, I removed the sentence from its connection, but faithfulness to the promise, made my friends, that I would neither mitigate, abridge, nor soften any expression which I delivered from the pulpit, obliges me to place it before the reader.

throne vacant, whilst the voice of gratitude thro' the same medium called the immortal William to the glorious seat.*

Having thus briefly stated to you the outlines of the event, I proceed to the deduction of those principles which these facts contain; these are as follows.

First, All government originates with the people.

Secondly, The people have a right to cashier their governors for misconduct.

Thirdly, The people have a right to change the form of their government if they think it proper so to do.

Let us briefly examine each of these by the events we have stated.—That we may do this aright, it may be necessary to define the sense in which the term **PEOPLE** is used—which is not to express a faction or a party, but the whole or at least a majority of the nation.

* Since the preaching of this Sermon, I have been lead to examine the various sentiments and ideas held forth therein—the history of the revolution and its consequences have been more fully investigated by me, the result of which, on my own mind, has been what I think it will be on the mind of every candid enquirer,—the character and conduct of William, appear in a far less favourable light.

With this explanation, we say, all government originates with the people—You will remember we are not now to support this and the other principles laid down, by abstracted reasoning on the nature of society, and other subjects, which have been, and may be brought forward in their defence—we are only to shew them to be the principles contained in and established by that REVOLUTION which is the basis of the BRITISH GOVERNMENT.—The position we are now treating of was clearly manifested in the events we have been considering—The people, thro' their representatives, declared the throne vacant, chose William for their King, and FIXED THE TERMS ON WHICH THEY TENDERED HIM THE CROWN—for the liberties then secured were not requested as favors, but demanded as of right—And afterwards secured by an act of Parliament, called on that account the *Bill of Rights*; which after enumerating various privileges, thus concludes: “All, and singular, the RIGHTS and LIBERTIES, claimed and asserted, are the true, ancient, and indubitable rights of the people of this kingdom”—And on the act of settlement being passed these privileges,

with others then brought forward, were declared to be the birth-right of the people of England. If, therefore, any deny the position, I would ask, on what foundation did William III. ascend the throne? Or, *by what right* do the House of Brunswick enjoy it? We are not at the close of the eighteenth century, to be told that the right of conquest gave a title, to one or the other. William indeed landed a small army in Britain, but not to seize the Crown, *for this he disclaimed*, but to defend the protestant interest; for which the nation freely bestowed on him what they had A RIGHT TO DISPOSE OF; a Crown limited and guarded by law; and we all know that this led to the settlement of the House of Brunswick, not by conquest, but by the choice of the people thro' their representatives.

Nor will any Jure Divino right answer the purpose of the opponents of this system, the age of superstition, in this respect, like the age of Chivalry being passed—the revolution of 1688, gave it in England its deadly blow by the resolution of the representatives of the nation, “that James had endeavoured to subvert the Constitution of the

"kingdom, by breaking the ORIGINAL CONTRACT between KING and PEOPLE," in consequence of which they declared the throne vacant.*

This declaration, as soon as the government was become effective, was followed by a statute,† declaring "all persons who should be reconciled to, or hold communion with the See of Rome, should profess the popish religion, or marry a papist, excluded and for ever incapable to possess, inherit or enjoy the Crown:" And on this basis the act which secures the Throne to the House of Brunswick stands.—Nay, so far is the constitution of England from acknowledging a *Jure divino* right in its Kings, that it has made it Treason to maintain it by writing, or printing; and to do it by preaching, teaching, or unadvised speaking, subjects the person offending to the penalties of the statutes of *premunire*.‡

It is therefore evident that the Crown of England is subject to the limitations of Par-

* *Com's Journal*, Feb. 7, 1688. † 1st W. & M. st 2, c. 2.

‡ 6 Ann, c. 7.—These penalties are imprisonment, fine, forfeiture, banishment, &c.

liament, as the *representatives* and *trustees* of the nation at large, and therefore must have originated with the people, in order for them to possess such a controuling power—nor does the crown, being hereditary, raise any barrier to this position, seeing the choice of a family, or of an individual, rests on the same principle, for if ever the throne should by any means, as by abdication, want of an heir, or otherwise, become vacant, the disposal of such vacancy would undoubtedly rest in the two houses of parliament, not in their own right, but as the trustees and representatives of the public, which strictly speaking is falling into the hands of the people from whence it originated.*

Let us now examine the second position laid down; viz. the people have a right to cashier their Governors for misconduct.

The former allowed, this follows as a consequence, for no created power can lawfully rise superior to that from whence it derives

* Two things in such a case would be undoubtedly necessary—1st, the will of a majority, at least, of the people, that the vacancy should be filled: 2^d, that the representative body should be truly, and bona fide chosen, by the People, and not by privileged Corporations, &c.

its existence.* The power of government is a power exercised by delegation, if the government is a legal one, and those who have a right to confer must possess a right to controul;—but I am not to reason on abstracted principles, but to prove this to be a principle of the English Constitution, a principle on which our ancestors acted, and on which they laid the foundation of that system of government under which we dwell.

To deny this, would be denying the revolution itself, for James's misconduct is the ostensible reason assigned on the face of their proceedings, for their declaring the throne vacant—"He having endeavoured to subvert the Constitution, by breaking the original contract between King and people;" how, "by violating the fundamental laws of the kingdom, and withdrawing himself from the same;" here the exercise of sovereignty standing on a mutual contract between the King and people, the misconduct

* Whenever a question arises between the Society at large, and any magistrate vested with powers or generally delegated by that Society, it must be decided by the voice of the society itself; there is not upon Earth any other tribunal to resort to.

Blackstone's Com. Vol. I. B. I. Page 212.

of James, in violating the laws, the condition of the contract, JUSTIFIED the resistance of the subject, and the placing of another in his stead.

But this position will not justify any body of persons, however dissatisfied they may be, in attempting to accomplish this by force, because the nation has DELEGATED its right of determining on the propriety of public concerns to the Parliament; to either branch of which they have a right to complain, if dissatisfied or oppressed, and nothing less than a majority of the nation can annul the Delegation, or assume the exercise of the functions with which the nation has invested it; for this would be, in fact, destroying the established government of the country, which nothing but a majority of the community can have any right to do.

Nor can this position justify the two houses of Parliament, in their common formation, in taking such a step, for this would be destroying the ends of their Institution, and usurping the executive power, which the nation has wholly DELEGATED to the King.

So sensible were our ancestors of this at

the period of the Revolution, that when William, then prince of Orange, summoned the parliament to meet for the purpose of considering the state of the Nation, and to provide an Executive power, tho' circumstances did not admit of an appeal to a general election, they would not proceed to the discussion in their original character, but in that of a National Convention.

Let us now proceed to the consideration of the third position laid down; viz. the people have a right to change—the form of their government when they think proper.

I think it will be taken for granted that a people will not think of exerting this right, while the government secures to them the blessings for which it was instituted; and even should it fail of this, the moderate party, which in every Country forms a great majority, will suffer long before they are brought to risque a change.—The power of prejudice—The dread of innovation, and the vast importance of the subject will weigh too much on their minds to permit a change on trivial occasions, and will effectually prevent an undue exercise of this power.

Indeed, there does not appear any party

with whom this right can be lodged with so much safety as with the great body of the nation—was it lodged in the hands of the executive power, even a virtuous monarch might be tempted to misuse it—an instance of this occurred in a late King of Sweden,* who, with a manifest disposition to promote the prosperity of his country, and the happiness of the people, established his own absolute authority on the ruins of Swedish Liberty—If vested in the legislative power, our own history teaches us how unsafe it would be—but in the body of the nation it can never be called forth, TILL CORRUPTION AND OPPRESSION HAVE SO FAR EXTENDED THEMSELVES AS TO RENDER ALL OTHER MEANS INEFFECTUAL.

This was precisely the case when our ancestors drove the race of Stuarts from the throne and chose, as their chief Magistrate, under due restrictions, a man who had no title but their choice, and who had too much sense to believe that any other could have proved half so advantageous to him.

These are the principles contained in the revolution we now commemorate, and which as the friends of liberty you ought to

* GUſTAVUS the third.

cherish not only in your own breasts, but in those of the rising generation, and without which your commemoration of the event is nothing worth. Had these principles been as well understood, and cherished as they ought to have been, the effects of the Revolution had extended much farther than they hitherto have; and would have left us less cause for complaint—The precious pearl of liberty had been more assiduously guarded, and the artful designs of DESPOTIC MINISTERS had never been able to efface it as they have done.

But I proceed to the third part of my subject, which is to offer a few thoughts on the present appearance of affairs, with reference to the events we have now considered.

When we reflect on the appearance of things in our own country we are constrained to confess that *the Government fixed at the Revolution which we this day commemorate, was inadequate to secure the blessings which all government ought to secure, or that the spirit of it is so far departed from, as to render it impotent—to assert the former would perhaps be saying too much; tho',*

as an opinion of my own, I have no scruple in declaring that there were striking imperfections on the face of the government then fixed, and that much of what we have reason to complain of, springs from those imperfections—But the great source of our evils takes its rise in a departure from its principles.

When I speak of imperfections in the government fixed at the Revolution in 1688, I do not mean to charge them on its principles, but on its regulations.

As the want of an effectual provision to restrain its expences, the consequence of which has been, the expenditure has ever exceeded the income, and that in such a proportion as to accumulate in 104 years a funded debt of more than Two hundred and fifty millions :* a debt which, notwithstanding the remission of Taxes to the amount of a few thousands in the last year, requires an annual supply of nine millions to defray its interest, &c. besides the expence of collecting.—But some may ask if

* If the floating unfunded debt is taken into the account, the debt at the time of the delivery of this discourse, was at least Two hundred and ninety millions sterling.

the minister has not been reducing of this debt—A reference to the Estimates and Debates on the subject, in the last Session of Parliament, will teach us that the debt has been reduced in much the same manner as you reduce your substance, when taking your money from one pocket you convey it safely to another.

In consequence of this dead weight of nine millions per annum, and about eight millions more as the current expences of the year, together with the addition of the poor rates, &c. the proportion of Taxes, in some circumstances, is as seventeen shillings, in others as fifteen to the pound.*

We must lament the necessity of these burdens, which, in a time of peace while our Commerce is extended to a degree hitherto unknown, and while much is said of the goodness of our Constitution, fill our streets with beggars, our workhouses with poor, and our goals with felons and debtors.

Another defect is *the want of a provision for a revival at certain periods*; the conse-

* Vide Sinclair's Account of the Revenue and Expence of Great Britain.

quence of which is our law books are loaded with *useless* and contradictory statutes; in which the principles of the Constitution are buried and lost, and the great body of the people having neither time or ability to investigate the voluminous pile, or to discover what is right or wrong, are almost arrived at Mr. Burke's state of *perfection*, "to admire their prejudices instead of their reason."

But the great source of our, real, evils is not in the Constitution itself, but in the departure from its principles—which, not to mention the excise laws which are in direct opposition to MAGNA CHARTA, and the BILL OF RIGHTS, and which can only be justified in their formation or extension on the plea of necessity, has been particularly the case with respect to the representation of the Commons, to which we will at present more particularly confine our views.

The first thing with respect to the House of Commons that naturally engages attention, is the EXTENSION of its duration to SEVEN YEARS—this is as glaring and striking a departure from the principles of the Constitution, as any the history of this country furnishes—yea, so strangely at variance is

principle and practice in this respect, that while an unrepealed statute is for sessional, and the Bill of Rights declares it to be the birth right of Englishmen to have frequent parliaments, we have them in fact only once in seven years—The consequences of which are, individuals find it to be for their interest to expend thousands to obtain a seat; while the HONEST and INDEPENDANT MAN, who would wish to serve his country, is deterred by the enormous expence of a contested election, from even standing forward as a Candidate.

AGAIN, the partial manner in which it is chosen is another manifest departure from the spirit of the constitution.—The law supposes every man who is not in such a situation as to have no will of his own, to have a voice in the representation, and of consequence a right in the choice of his representatives; Whereas the number of actual voters will scarce bear any comparison with the unrepresented part of the nation.*

* Vide History of the Present State of Representation, published by Ridgway, 8vo. price 1s. and History of the Boroughs of Great Britain, published by Crosby, 2 vols 8vo. price 14s.

The bill of rights declares the election of members of Parliament ought to be free—yet the greater part are returned by ARISTOCRATIC INFLUENCE, MINISTERIAL MANŒUVRES and ROTTEN CORPORATIONS—few Boroughs are better represented than this, and even here one hundred and sixty three individuals, of whom it cannot be said that the odd sixty three have any will of their own, are the electors for twelve thousand Inhabitants, leaving Dock, Stoke and Stonehouse, whose numbers are more than double, out of the account.*

Yet with these visible defects before us, we are told by a PENSIONED WRITER, that “our House of Commons is adequate and sufficient for all the purposes for which representation is requisite or for which it was originally instituted.”

* On my making this remark to one of the oldest and most respectable members of the Corporation of Plymouth, a man who has been and still is in the Government service, he observed, I might have rated the number of independent electors much lower, for on his own knowledge, he could assert that at no one Election which had taken place for more than forty years, had there ever been fifty persons who had voted without restraint; so very pure are the electors, and so very free are the elections in this immaculate Borough.

Against this assertion I shall oppose a few plain facts, comparing them with the design of representation.

One end of representation is to express the voice of the nation, for the impracticability of conveniently collecting this voice any other way is the basis of the representative system—If then the British House of Commons answers the end of its institution, it must express this voice—But in the case of the Armament fitted out against Russia, the majority of that house and the voice of the Nation were in direct opposition to each other.

Another end of representation is to guard and direct the national purse—But tho' in the armament fitted out against Russia, and a like armament against Spain, FIVE MILLIONS were expended ; yet a majority was not to be found who would enquire into the nature or propriety of the expenditure—tho' to do them justice it must be confessed there was an all sufficient majority to vote the supply on the confidence of an apostate minister.

Another end of representation is to enquire into the conduct of those to whom the

Constitution has delegated power—but tho' an high court of judicature has, by a verdict, published to the nation at large that a certain officer of the crown has used the Excise and Stamp Laws for the purpose of influencing the purity of elections; and tho' an honourable Member made a motion for an investigation of the business, yet a majority of that house could not be found who had VIRTUE OR COURAGE sufficient to obtain for the people any satisfaction.

If these facts are duly considered, they point out more fully than a thousand abstracted arguments, the present state of British representation and the source of our national evils.

Let us now turn our attention to the situation of a neighbouring nation—a nation which we have long been led to condemn; oppressed by a TYRANT, and kept under by ARISTOCRATIC influence; like Issachar, they couched between two burdens; at length freed from despotism and oppression, they have founded government on the imprescriptible rights of man.

This event, whether we view it as Christians, or Britons, ought to afford us joy.

As Christians, the blow thereby given to popery, and the grand opening made for the propagation of DIVINE TRUTH, must fill our hearts with praise.

As Britons, the dawn of liberty opening to twenty-five millions of individuals ought to be considered as a spectacle truly pleasing—But when we consider this event as bringing us an addition of as many friends, preventing further wars, and as a consequence any greater accumulation of national debt; it is doubtful whether France or we have the greatest reason to rejoice.—GERMAN and RUSSIAN DESPOTS may lift up their sacrilegious arms against the glorious fabric of French Liberty; but all will be in vain; God is on their side, and the prayers of all that love and fear him.

Look to the events of the campaign, the Lord has brought the counsel of their enemies to nought, put his hook in their nostrils, and his bit in their mouths, and turned them back by the way they came—Oh! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men.*

* The reader is desired to bear in his memory that this

I'll not enlarge further, but proceed to the last part of my subject; viz. point out what ought, as Christians and Britons, to be our conduct under present circumstances.

As Christians, We have been reflecting on the intolerant and erroneous spirit of popery, and our deliverance from its power; give me leave then to impress the following hints on your minds.

Take care you are not papists in conduct; —Take no doctrine on trust, however zealous the preacher may appear—You have the scriptures in your hands, use them as

Sermon was delivered in November, 1792; a period when the present government of France did not exist—the King and Queen were indeed suspended from the exercise of the duties attendant on the regal office, but had not been tried, nor had any serious intention of bringing them to trial been made public. The Duke of B----- had indeed published his infamous manifesto, and like most b-ll-s had discovered his inability to put his threats in execution: but this country had taken no part in the war—we appeared only as spectators. Nothing therefore said at that time can be applied with justice to any subsequent events; and I must enter my caveat against any such application.—My sentiments on the change the French Government has undergone since the above period, as well as on the awful consequences that have followed, must remain, *at present*, within my breast.

the touchstone of truth, and receive or reject as warranted by them.

Again—Persecute no man for his religious tenets however different from your own—Extend with pleasure to others the liberty you claim for yourselves, believing a man may fill up the relative ties of society with honor, tho' the dogmas of his religious creed be not what you approve.

Labor to spread the rays of divine truth abroad, pray for and strive to propagate the glorious Gospel of peace, be emulous in diffusing the blessings you so plentifully enjoy, where Pagan, Mahometan, or Papal darkness still reigns, remembering the time will come when "all shall be brought to know the Lord; yea, when the knowledge of him shall cover the face of the earth, as the waters cover the face of the deep."

Attend with diligence and care to the instruction of the rising generation.—This is a duty not only incumbent on those who have an offspring of their own, but on those who have not; the children of the poor are in a degree yours, and the greatest kindness you can possibly do them, is to attend to the early cultivation of their minds.

As Britons in the present important crisis, it behoves you to act with that dignity, which has long characterized the Nation to which you belong;—we labour under evils, but we need not throw ourselves into a state of anarchy and confusion to obtain redress; to this you should prove superior; we want neither Revolution nor Blood—A reform in the representative system is allowed by almost all parties to be necessary and essential to the continuance of our national prosperity; and if ever this is properly effected, every other evil will gradually cease to exist—It is therefore the duty of every Briton who values his individual or national prosperity, to unite in promoting to the utmost of his ability, every legal attempt for the obtaining of so desirable an end.

Again, it is your duty to instil into the minds of the rising Generation, proper principles of CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY, for nothing can be more prejudicial to their habits, or the freedom of the Land, than the inculcation of principles of blind passive obedience: on one hand it raises a veneration in the mind for what is not understood, and on the contrary exposes it to be the

dupe of artful insinuation, which may alienate the affections from that which, if understood, would be highly esteemed.

Instead therefore of teaching your offspring blindly that they are governed by King, Lords, and Commons, teach them that these are men ; that themselves are to arrive at the stature of men ; that the excellence of their government is not in having King, Lords and Commons, but in King, Lords and Commons governing according to Laws, which secure the rights of every individual of the realm, and who are only worthy of esteem while they respect and venerate these rights.

To conclude ; some will perhaps say I have spoken my mind freely ; I confess I have, and will add, honestly ; and I think the events we are now met to commemorate, and the circumstances under which we attend to the commemoration of them, made it necessary : And I should have but a mean opinion of the *boasted Liberty* of my Country, if on this occasion I was not permitted freely to express my sentiments on a subject, in which we are all so immediately concerned.

Leaving therefore what has been said to your further consideration, I shall only add my sincere wishes and prayers, that it may be instrumental in leading you to a due consideration of your mercies; a better acquaintance with the principles of civil and religious liberty, and a proper and steady attention to your duty as Christians and Britons under every circumstance. AMEN.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED NOVEMBER 18TH, 1792.

ROMANS, XIII, 12.

*"The Night is far spent, the Day is at hand;
let us therefore cast off the works of dark-
ness, and let us put on the armour of
light."*

IN the preceding chapters of this Epistle, the inspired Penman has given us a complete system of Christian Ethics, for there is scarce a doctrine or precept in the Gospel but what he has more or less elucidated and explained; in this he gives us a system of Christian Politics: to some this may seem

strange, but a reference to the chapter will prove the truth of the assertion.

This conduct of the Apostle's was necessary, as christians in every age have been branded with being inimical to magisterial power and authority.—Tho' I will not take upon me to assert this is agreeable to the common observation of the worst crying out first; yet was I to judge of the past by the present, I should soon determine this to be the case, for as I have often had occasion to observe of some people's religion, so I must of their loyalty, they need be continually talking of it, or otherwise no one would know they had any.—But that we may not mistake the Apostle's meaning on this subject, we will by way of introduction to the words of our text, consider,

His description of legal magisterial power and authority.

The duties he enjoins on Christians to, or with respect to, this power.

The motives which he adduces to Influence to a due performance of these duties.

With respect to the first of these the Apostle asserts, that "*the powers that be, are ordained of GOD.*" v. 1st. This is a truth

with respect to the essence of magisterial power the economy of nature proclaims it—Man is formed a social and dependent Being—the poor cannot do without the rich, nor the rich without the poor—every thing around us proclaims the necessity of degrees, and subordination in society—yea if we turn our Eyes to Heaven itself, as far as we have any thing certainly revealed of that state, we have ARCHANGELS, ANGELS, PRINCIPALITIES, POWERS and VIRTUES, so that the man who could entertain an idea of Equality, IN CHARACTER OF PROPERTY, must be little less than a fool or a madman, and ought to be dealt with as such.

But this assertion of the Apostles respecting the origin of magisterial power will not hold good with respect to the peculiar form under which magisterial power is administered and exercised, as this in a legal Government, must depend ON LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE—But under whatever order it is administered, there must be a chief magistrate, whether dignified with the title of EMPEROR, KING, STADHOLDER, DOGE, PRESIDENT, or any other;

hence the Scriptures distinguish, between the ORDINANCE OF GOD, as the essence of magisterial power, and the ORDINANCE OF MAN as the form or manner in which that power is exercised. 1st. Pet. II Chapter and 13 v. *submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, &c.*

Again, the apostle declares the magistrate is "*the Minister of God for Good.*" v. 4 NATURAL GOOD, as exercising his power, for the protection of persons and property which would otherwise be endangered by evil men—MORAL GOOD, as caring and providing for the instruction of the ignorant, the punishment of vice and the reward of virtue—CIVIL GOOD, as extending *as far as the welfare of the community will admit*, the blessings of equal Liberty, and affording protection in the enjoyment of it—SPIRITUAL GOOD, as labouring to promote and uphold those means which are for its advantage*—

* In this remark the Author would not be considered as admitting the Magistrate, to possess a right to confer peculiar rewards on any one sect of Christians, to the exclusion of others, or to tolerate or refuse the free exercise of their religion, to any sect whatever—As a dissenter he cannot in this sense bow to any authority under Heaven—he only

this is the apostle's description of magisterial power, and he farther adds, "*they are God's ministers attending continually on these things.*"

Under whatever form power, like this, is exercised, that must be acknowledged the best, which secures the greatest portion of this good, with the least portion of individual property and liberty.

2d. We notice the duties enjoined on Christians to, or with respect to, this power.

1st. SUBJECTION. "*Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.*" v. 1.

2d. SUPPORT. "*Render therefore to all their dues, Tribute to whom tribute is due—Custom to whom custom &c.*" v. 7.—again "*for this cause pay you tribute.*"

These are the undoubted duties of every member of a civil community and much more of Christians, who of all men are bound to keep and support order in Society, and while the magisterial powers are for good to them they are inexcusable if they do not; yea they

considers the Magistrate as bound by the duties of his office to afford equal protection, and encouragement to every class of Christians in the exercise of their religious opinions and practices.

are undeserving of the character of Christians, as in such case they break a positive command of God—but if on the contrary magisterial power is used for the purposes of Tyranny, and Oppression, and he that should be the minister of God for Good, becomes the Tyrant and Despot, the obligations to obedience and support undoubtedly cease.

3d. We consider the motives adduced to influence to a due performance of these duties.

1st. A Consideration of the powers where-with magistrates are invested—" *They are a terror to evil doers,*"—" *the ministers of God.*"—*Messengers to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

2d. " *For conscience sake,*" as the Command of God—Christians obey from the noblest motives, not from fear, but from a conscientious regard to Gods injunctions.

3d. A consideration of the language of our text: *The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light.*

These words we will attempt more particularly to investigate as they contain a positive assertion, and certain exhortations,

founded on a consideration of its importance.

The assertion contained in this portion of scripture may be considered with reference to several times and circumstances.

The Jewish Economy was a night season, and the faithful among that people; looked with anxious expectation for the Gospel day breaking and the shadows of ordinances fleeing away: but the night in this Text can have no reference to that dispensation, for that was already past and quite spent, and all the uncertainties, arising from the mists which enveloped it, concerning the promised Messiah, were done away, the prophecies were clearly fulfilled which concerned his PERSON, BIRTH, WORK, SUFFERINGS and DEATH, as well as those which respected the consequences attendant on them: and had not those things, to accomplish the glorious designs of JEHOVAH, been hid from the Jewish nation, it would have been the first to have acknowledged them.

But the night here referred to may respect the situation in which the Gentile world lay prior to the light of the Gospel breaking in upon them—this was a night season indeed—

"darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people:" and this darkness extended itself to all the nations of the earth, the Jews only excepted. To remove this darkness, Christ was promised to be a light to lighten the Gentiles; he was held forth as the Sun of Righteousness, which was to arise with healing on his beams—agreeable to which, when in the fullness of time he actually did appear, we find him assuming the character of the light of the world, and asserting that he was the true light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

When we consider and duly reflect on this state to which we have referred, without the knowledge of the true God or a teaching Prophet, we are not at all astonished that a general damp, with respect to religion, had taken place—Man had lost the knowledge of his maker, had imbibed wrong ideas of his nature and attributes, and of course had sunk into all the absurdities of ignorance and superstition, with their constant attendants vice and dissipation. Nor could the faint light of philosophy that occasionally sprang up, lead back the wandering soul to God, or stop the torrent of depravity which

covered the face of the Globe. Men were busily engaged with the unfruitful works of darkness, changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man—and to birds—and four footed beasts, and creeping things.—Given up to their vile corruption, they dishonoured their own bodies, and as far as in them lay even altered the sacred laws of nature.

When the Apostle wrote this Epistle this night was far spent, and the Gospel day was at hand, the Gentile world was addressed in the language of the Prophet: "Arise and shine, thy light is come, and the glory, of the Lord is risen on thee."

But as no scripture is of private interpretation, this assertion may be considered with reference to the night of Mahomedan and Papal darkness, which succeeded those pure rays of Gospel light that shone resplendent in the primitive ages of the Church.—This night has been long, and its darkness great, while its consequences have been in a great degree fatal NOT ONLY TO RELIGION, but to the PEACE, HAPPINESS, and PROSPERITY of nations and individuals.

But still its darkness and misery has not been like that which was experienced before the light of the Gospel first shone forth, for in the midst of its most gloomy periods some rays of light and truth have made their appearance, and prevented a total relapse into Heathenism and Idolatry—These rays have waxed stronger and stronger, and at this time proclaim this night to be far spent; there are many striking appearances of the Mahomedan Empire falling; and with respect to the papal see, from the late defection of one of its **PRINCIPAL SUPPORTERS**, together with the rapid progress of knowledge, little doubt can be entertained in our minds, of its dissolution being near at hand, and that the period is fast approaching when the Gospel shall again shine forth in all its resplendent purity and lustre, and the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the great deep.

Again, we may consider this assertion with reference to a season of Persecution—darkness and ignorance are the parents of persecution for religious sentiments, and during their reign what a night has the Church of Christ experienced.

1st. Under pagan powers. How have the Heathen raged and threatened to extirpate the name Jesus from the Earth? and how awfully dark must that dispensation, have been when bonds, imprisonment, and death awaited a profession of the religion of Jesus Christ.

2d. Under Mahomedan and Papal powers, how dreadful has been the intolerant spirit that has gone forth! especially under the latter? What torture has the imagination been able to invent, but what has been exercised? What punishment, but what has been inflicted? If contention for dominion, thirst for revenge, or ambitious schemes of conquest, have sent millions of the human race to the grave, how many more have been consigned to an eternal state by contentions for ceremonies and creeds, which had they been as universally received and believed as their advocates wished them to have been, would have added nothing to the morality and happiness of mankind, or the glory of God.

But this night of persecution is far spent, for tho' in some governments penal laws are still kept in force, for the purpose of

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crushing certain religious tenets, yet for the most part they are ashamed to execute them, so that we may soon expect to see them hirmount their prejudices, and renounce them altogether. The day is at hand when men will no more be persecuted for their religious opinions, farther than they are destructive of morality—When brethren will no more be set in opposition to each other on account of *nonsensical Dogmas*, or one class of Christians pronounce damnation on another, for not believing that which is of no importance to their present or future felicity:—No, on the contrary, those who are now at variance, will learn to esteem each other as brethren, and will sit under their own vine and fig-tree, each worshiping God according to the dictates of his conscience, none daring to make him afraid, and all finding that **WHILE CONSCIENCE IS LEFT AT LIBERTY MEN CAN UNITE AS CITIZENS and CHRISTIANS; yea, as FRIENDS,** tho' they cannot with respect to religious sentiments see eye to eye.

Permit me to indulge another thought agreeable with the assertion in the text; viz. *That the night of Slavery and Bondage is far*

spent, and the day of universal Liberty is at hand: a day in which men will no longer destroy the happiness and liberty of their fellow-creatures, but rather labor to promote their felicity and interest.—The noble attempts which have been made on the behalf of our unhappy African brethren teach us that men begin to understand each other's rights, and lead us to hope that the efforts of a few interested individuals, whose hearts are grown callous to the tender ties of nature, will not be sufficient to withstand the generous exertions of the friends of mankind. But as Britons rejoicing in liberty, let me remind you that, tho' much has been done on behalf of the untaught African, yet much still remains to be done; let me then urge you to forget not their cause, nor cease your attention to their interest, till they have obtained that LIBERTY which the voice of reason and religion proclaims their RIGHT, and are properly instructed for the enjoyment of it.

Again, permit me to consider this assertion *with reference to yourselves*, and addressing you as Christians, say the night of dark-

ness and ignorance which covered your minds is far spent, the day spring, from on high, has visited your souls, and he that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into your hearts, to give you the knowledge of Christ Jesus, your Lord, and tho' much darkness still remains on your minds, and much error on account of it; yet the day is at hand when knowledge shall be perfected, nor can all the powers of darkness prevent its accomplishment, for he that begun the good work in you, will perform it to the day of Jesus Christ.

Again—in this assertion the apostles may have respect to the *present period of our existence*, which is called in scripture a night, on account of the darkness and imperfection which attends it. Alas! how imperfect is our greatest knowledge, we know but in part, and see but in part; in its utmost extent it will not reach the morrow, the events of which may baffle the utmost stretch of our imagination; hence we often err in our ways, and deviate from the paths which more perfect knowledge would lead us into: hence follow those afflictions and disconsolations, which are our constant attendants thro' life.—This

night however is far spent with many of us, happy is it, if the day is at hand which will introduce us into everlasting perfection and glory—where all the darkness, affliction and distress of the present state, will be lost in the uninterrupted light and enjoyment of God—If this is our expectation let us,

Attend to the exhortations given to us in the text “ Let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armour of light.”

What the Apostle intends by works of darkness, is evident from v. 13. 14. Where he exhorts to “ walk honestly, not in rioting and drunkenness, nor in chambering or wantonness, nor in strife or envy, but to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not to make provision for flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.” By this expression therefore he evidently intends all manner of evil, whether committed immediately against God, our own souls, or fellow-creatures, and these are called works of darkness.

As springing from dark corrupted minds, for was not the minds of man darkened and corrupted so as to call sweet, bitter, and bitter, sweet, he would never suppose happiness could be found in the paths of sin and folly.

As being done under the Influence of the Prince of darkness, hence, such persons are represented in the Scriptures, as led captive by the Devil at his will.

As being opposite to the revealed will of God, which is light itself—to Christ who is the light of the world—to the scriptures which are a light to the feet, and a lamp to the paths of good men, contrary to the light of nature, and to the light of the Spirit of God : hence such who are pursuing of a sinful course are said to walk in darkness, and to be without light.

As the end of these works is eternal darkness if almighty grace prevent not ; for God declares they shall be cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth—Yet notwithstanding the Scriptures proclaim this to be the awful end of the transgressor, yet how many are there that prefer darkness to light, and choose the road that leads to endless woe.

Farther, the apostle exhorts to put on the armour of light—true religion is not a bare negation of evil, but the actual performance of good it is not enough that we reject vice, grace secures the exercise of virtue, and short

of this there is not, nor there cannot be, the least evidence of interest in Christ, for the tree is known by his fruit, and the Saviour says, by their fruit his disciples shall be distinguished, therefore put on the armour of light, by which may be intended,

The Gospel and its glorious doctrines, which is an armour to the Christian warrior, by this he defends himself from delusion and error; under cover of this he attacks the enemies of Christ and his Church, and either silences or obtains the victory over them; here he finds an answer to all the suggestions of the adversary of his soul, and is enabled to vanquish an host of doubts, by the enjoyment of that glorious truth, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;" and while strengthened, and supported by the gracious promise thereof, he goes on from strength to strength; from conquering to conquer; till as the final termination of his conflict, he is called to appear before his God, to receive a crown of never fading Glory; Or,

By this armour of light may be intended the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the Christian's armour or Defence—from the wrath of

offended deity, he having sustained, to the full extent, the dreadful weight, and thus engaged eternal justice for the sinners friend. From the curse of the law, he being made a curse for us—from condemnation, he having put himself in the Sinner's place, so "that there is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit."—Putting on Christ therefore in the sense of the apostle in this connection, is to believe in and trust on him for salvation; to look on him as made of God, unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption and it is for this very purpose that he is preached, and set forth crucified, in the gospel: hence the apostle declares that thro' this man, is preached unto you, the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses, and this declaration is agreeable to the whole tenor of the gospel, the substance of which is, that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should never perish but have everlasting Life: Or,

By this armour of light, may be intended the graces of the spirit, exercised in a way of duty and dependance, as in the Epistle to the Ephesians, Chap. vi, v. 13, &c. "Wherefore take unto the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand; stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, above all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto, with all perseverance and supplication for all Saints."—It is only when we are enabled to do this, that we can obtain victory over our spiritual foes, for if sin has not dominion over us, it is because we are not under the law, but under grace: or rather,

Or rather by this armour of light is intended an upright evangelical obedience, in opposition to the works of darkness, mentioned

in the preceding part of the verse—This tho' of no avail in point of justification, is of the utmost importance to a Christian course.

As adorning the soul and rendering the man amiable, under every circumstance of life, prosperous or adverse, while it affords him a solid peace under ever change.

As shielding and defending the man and his principles from the calumnies of ungodly men: these are always ready to charge on the Christian, that which for the most part he is a stranger to, but which, if guilty of, is not owing in the least to his principles, but to the common infirmities of nature.

This ought to make you, as christians, more particularly careful to put on the armour of christian obedience, "that whereas they speak of you as evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ, for it is better if the will of God so be, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing."

This obedience is called an armour of light—as springing from the light of God in the soul, agreeable with that scripture, "God hath shined into your hearts:" hence that language, "In thy light we see light"—

As being directed by the Gospel which is light itself, a light to the feet and a lamp to the paths of good men—As it will bear the inspection of the light: hence such as thus walk, are called Christians of the light of the day—As it will terminate in everlasting light and glory; “for the path of the just is as a shining light that shineth brighter and brighter to the perfect day.”

OH! SIRs; what an argument does the apostle use to inforce these duties; the night is far spent, the day is at hand, the day of glory, the day which will satisfy the utmost wishes of you capacious souls in giving the full uninterrupted and eternal enjoyment of Jesus Christ, and all the fullness of a world of joy.

Christians, let these considerations animate and encourage you in the paths of christian obedience, God is not unmindful of your work of faith, and labour of love—he will soon reward your toil—

Yet a season and you know,

Happy entrance shall be given,

All your sorrows left below,

And Earth exchanged for Heaven.

SINNERS, let this Text alarm you, the night of life is indeed far spent, some of you are

growing grey in sin—But is there not a more awful night approaching; a night of eternal darkness, from which, if once entered on, there is no return or deliverance: "The wicked shall be cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth."

An awful night this indeed, the very thought is sufficient to appal a thinking mind and raise an inquiry in the hitherto careless soul, of "what shall I do to be saved." Oh! that this may be the case with all of you, that have till this period been careless and unconcerned about the state of your souls—then shall you know, that thro' Jesus Christ, is preached to you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

That this may be your happy lot and experience, may God in infinite mercy grant for Christs sake.

AMEN.

FINIS